



**University of
Zurich**^{UZH}

**Zurich Open Repository and
Archive**

University of Zurich
University Library
Strickhofstrasse 39
CH-8057 Zurich
www.zora.uzh.ch

Year: 2012

Measuring the Brand Image of a Place

Fetscherin, M ; Heilmann, Tobias

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich
ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-76838>
Conference or Workshop Item
Published Version

Originally published at:

Fetscherin, M; Heilmann, Tobias (2012). Measuring the Brand Image of a Place. In: 5th Annual World Medical Tourism Global Health Congress, Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, October 2012.

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265972243>

Measuring the Brand Image of a Place

Article · October 2012

CITATIONS

0

READS

117

2 authors:



[Marc Fetscherin](#)

Rollins College

75 PUBLICATIONS 1,626 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



[Tobias Heilmann](#)

campaignfit GmbH | Swiss Distance University of Applied Science

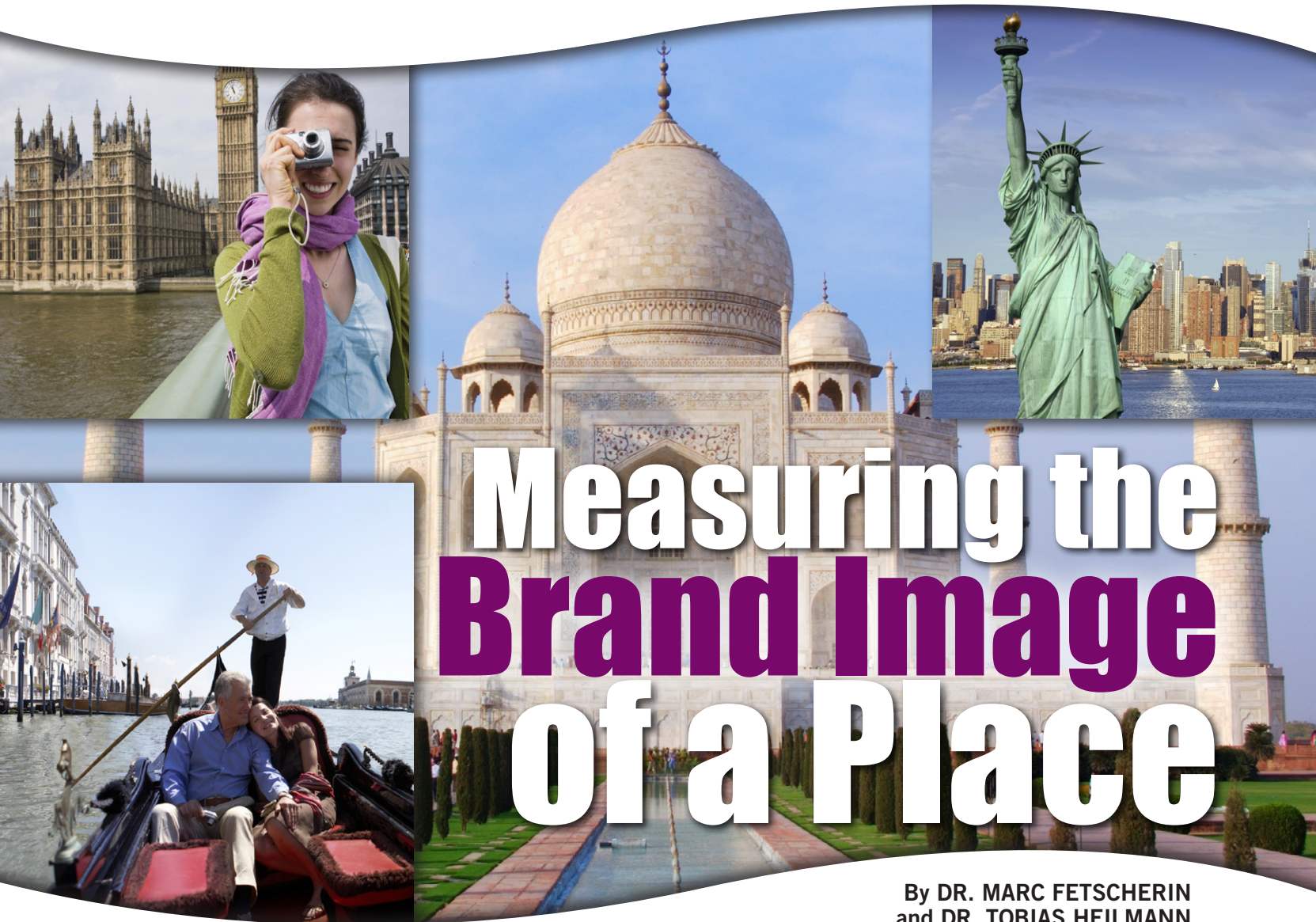
9 PUBLICATIONS 21 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



International Business Teaching Scholarship [View project](#)



Measuring the Brand Image of a Place

By DR. MARC FETSCHERIN
and DR. TOBIAS HEILMANN

In today's global economy, places such as villages, municipalities, counties, provinces, states or even countries compete against each other for the limited pool of people and natural and financial resources. Place branding has been defined as the practice of using branding and marketing techniques to the economic, social, political and cultural developments of a place. Place branding research is still in its infancy and it has only been within the last two decades that an increasing number of academics as well as practitioners have focused on this important and relevant topic. An attractive place brand has a positive impact on inbound tourism, attracting foreign direct investments (FDI), and increasing immigration, all of which contribute to an increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) and the overall economic growth of a place.

According to the OECD report from 2010 (p. 78), “inbound tourism accounts for 30 percent of service exports, up to 11 percent of GDP and 12 percent of employment at country level”. These positive direct (e.g., service exports, income from lodging, restaurants, food) and indirect effects (e.g., decrease in unemployment, increase in tax revenues) illustrate the importance and relevance of place branding. Measuring and managing a place brand, such as a tourist destination, becomes a key strategic tool for places, their competitiveness and their sustainable development.

This article presents a new framework and measurement scale for which the various stakeholders of a place can use to assess the brand image of a place. We use the personality metaphor to describe the brand image of a place. This is based on two main principles. First, this is analogous to the “naive psychology” or “folk psychology” in which people use personality characteristics to describe other people. In the

same line of arguments, Aaker (1997) developed the brand personality scale for products and services. We use the same logic to conceptualize the “personality” of a place but we use the term “personality” in a different way in the context of brands for products or places (consumer behavior) than in the context of people (psychology). Second, people seem to have a need to anthropomorphize objects or place to enhance their interactions with the nonmaterial world. There is also extensive empirical support that using the personality metaphor to describe brands is a viable metaphor for understanding consumers’ perception of brand images.

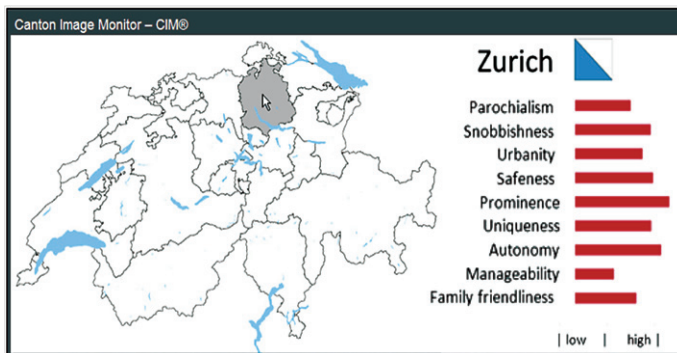
“ Our scale can be used for any type of place such as municipalities, cities, regions, provinces or states... ”

Measurement Scale Development Process

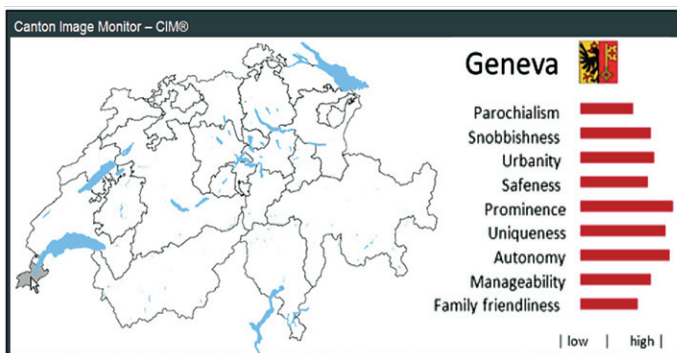
1. specify the domain of the construct;
2. generate a sample of items from the literature, survey and expert groups;
3. collect initial data;
4. purify the measure and assess reliability;
5. collect new data;
6. assess reliability;
7. assess construct validity; and
8. develop norms.

cf. Churchill (1979).

Due to the given economic relevance of place branding to sustainable development of a place, specific valid and reliable measures are necessary in order to assess the distinct brand image the place has in the minds of the people. We followed a very rigorous theoretical, methodological and statistical 8-step process (see box) to develop our measurement scale. In collaboration with the marketing research company *campaignfit ltd*, a total of 8,606 respondents participated in our multilingual studies on 26 states in Switzerland, resulting in a reliable and valid scale consisting of 9 dimensions which provide meaningful differences between the image of a place. Our scale consists of the following 9 dimensions: parochialism, snobbishness, urbanity, safeness, prominence, uniqueness, autonomy, manageability, and family friendliness. The following figures provide two examples of two states or "cantons" of Switzerland: Zurich and Geneva. The full details for each of the 26 states of Switzerland can be accessed on the following websites www.kantonsimage.ch and the English language version <http://www.kantonsimage.ch/en>. Our scale can be used for any type of place such as municipalities, cities, regions, provinces or states, depending on the objective and need of the study.



© www.campaignfit.ch



© www.campaignfit.ch

There are a number of valuable practical implications. Marketing and place branding professionals and organizations should understand the concept of the brand image of a place for several reasons. First, people do perceive significant differences in place personalities or place brand images. Second, the distinctive dimensions of our measurement scale is a valuable measurement tool for various stakeholders of a place such as governments (municipal, county, region or state-level), urban strategists, development agencies, non-governmental organizations and tourism agencies. It enables them on one hand to understand how their places are perceived as expressed by personality traits and on the other hand it allows them to assess whether the consumer perception is in line with their intended place identity and place branding strategy. This then helps them to address discrepancies or to create a distinct and unique place brand and communicate it to the various target segments. Finally, our scale is the first tool of its kind to make such an assessment possible. As we have a multi-dimensional construct, our scale enables place marketers to study and measure the brand image of a place at either the macro level in respect to the overall brand image of a place or on the micro level along the 9 dimensions of the brand image of a place. ■

References

Aaker, J. L. (1997). *Dimensions of brand personality*. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34, 347-356.

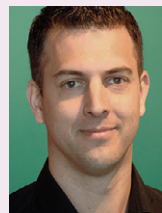
Churchill, G. A. (1979). *A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs*. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16, 64-73.

OECD (2010). *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies Report*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/document/47/0,3746,de_34968570_34968855_40173167_1_1_1_1,00.html

About the Authors



Dr. Marc Fetscherin is an Associate Professor of International Business and Marketing and a Cornell Distinguished Faculty at Rollins College, United States. He is also a Fellow at Harvard University (Asia Programs). His expertise is in International Marketing with a focus on Branding. Specifically he focuses on topics such as global brand management, corporate branding, human brands, brand equity, brand image, brand personality, consumer brand relationships, and destination branding such as city and nation branding.



Dr. Tobias Heilmann is CEO of *campaignfit ltd.* (www.campaignfit.ch), Switzerland, a consulting company specialized on place branding. Based on scientific tools, Dr. Heilmann and his team measures place brand personality, develops and implements strategies for places (municipal, county, region or state-level). These strategies are typically in the areas of place image, place identity, economic competitiveness, place promotion, tourism and place attraction. Dr. Heilmann received his Ph.D. in Business Psychology from the University of Zurich, Switzerland. He holds a master degree in Organizational Psychology from the University of Tübingen, Germany. He is also lecturing consumer psychology at the University of Zurich and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich.